

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Bulgaria
Program Title:	Rule of Law
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	183-0220
Status:	Continuing
Proposed FY 2003 Obligation:	\$3,200,000 AEEB
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$663,000 AEEB
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$3,500,000 AEEB
Year of Initial Obligation:	1999
Estimated Completion Date:	2007

Summary: The USAID Rule of Law program is comprised of: advocating for legal reform and access to justice; modernizing the judiciary by creating effective court administration/case management systems; and establishing professional standards for judges and court administrators. The program also supports establishing the National Institute of Justice as the public institute responsible for training judges and court administrators.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2003 Program:

Court administration and case management (\$1,200,000 AEEB). Assistance in modernizing the Bulgarian judiciary will focus on improving court administration/case management processes and procedures; formulating policy; promulgating regulations; providing judicial training; and solidifying the investments in model pilot courts. The pilot courts will introduce case-management software and establish improved administrative systems. At the same time, USAID will work to improve court operations by providing systematic assistance for regular court administration work. A problem identification survey will be completed to provide further support for the project. The Ministry of Justice will receive assistance to implement the Action Plan for its Judicial Reform Strategy. Collaboration will continue with the Ministry's Information Technology Department to conduct a national conference to reach agreement on automation systems' compatibility and standards. The project will complete a national court automation assessment survey. Based on this survey and lessons learned from the pilot phase of court automation, the project will make the necessary modifications to the case management system software to match the national technical standards. This will lay the foundation for an EU automation project, anticipated to begin in late 2003. USAID will continue to provide training on court administration, customer service, computer skills and technical assistance to the newly organized Bulgarian Court Clerks' Association, with the aim of improving professional standards. In addition, clerks' operational desk manuals will be prepared and position descriptions for court administrators will be drafted and used. Principal contractor/grantee is: East-West Management Institute (prime).

Magistrate training (\$800,000 AEEB). Support to the Magistrates Training Center will ensure its successful transformation from an NGO into a government-financed, public institution known as the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). This will include developing expanded training programs, as mandated by the Judicial Systems Act. USAID plans to provide resources for 55-60 courses to train 70 percent of all the judges. Over 200 judges and 600 courts personnel are expected to receive training in court automation and administration. USAID will work in collaboration with European donors who will provide training on EU laws. Owing to a serious lack of professionally trained judicial trainers, USAID will also continue to support a program to develop a cadre of sitting judges to serve as trainers at the NIJ in order to ensure the Institute's sustainability. Principal contractor/grantee is: East-West Management Institute (prime).

Rule of law advocacy and policy reform (\$1,200,000 AEEB). USAID will continue providing technical assistance and training for judicial reform activities that have shown results in the past two years.

Advocacy and policy support for judicial reform will receive special attention, since all the counterparts need to form strategic alliances and buy-in to the reforms. Furthermore, promulgating implementing regulations for the Judicial Systems Act will be critical to the judicial reform efforts of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice. Work will continue on developing and enacting a Judicial Code of Conduct, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Judges' Association. Principal contractor/grantee is: East-West Management Institute (prime).

FY 2004 Program:

Court administration and case management (\$1,700,000 AEEB). Based on lessons learned from the model courts, new processes and procedures will be tested and introduced in targeted courts. USAID will refine the hiring process for court administrators and develop a training program for court administrators and judges with court administration responsibilities. USAID will develop a 'recipe' for the sustainability of court automation, based on operational and functionality reviews of automation use in the model courts.

Magistrate training (\$600,000 AEEB). In FY 2004 USAID plans to provide technical assistance to complete the transition of assistance to magistrates through the NIJ, laying the groundwork for increased assistance from other donors such as the EU.

ROL advocacy and policy reform (\$1,200,000 AEEB). Assistance in advocacy for legal reform and access to justice will continue. USAID will strengthen Bulgaria's ability to meet rule of law international standards, prepare for EU accession, promote a more stable economy, and serve as a better partner for U.S. strategic interests.

Performance and Results: USAID was integrally involved with implementing various provisions of Bulgaria's National Judicial Strategy. This included assisting the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council in preparing an Action Plan, drafting legislative amendments, and working on Codes of Ethics for judges and court staff. The USAID model pilot court initiative, which now has eleven courts, received wide and resounding approval from counterparts and court users. The installation of software for an automated case management system was completed in five pilot courts in 2002, thus reducing case delay. It also provided the testing ground for designing workflow templates for regional and district courts and a simplified case management system. This has resulted in faster and more efficient handling of court documents, brought about greater professionalism among the court staff, provided greater services to the public, and removed much of the administrative burden from the judges. The USAID-supported Magistrate Training Center strengthened its capacity and received such wide recognition that, at its current capacity, it has become unable to meet the demand from judges for new and expanded courses. The number of judges and court personnel trained in court automation and/or administration increased along with the number of courses.

As more legislation is passed to meet the demands of a democratic society and market economy and as Bulgaria moves closer to meeting the requirements for EU accession, the Bulgarian judiciary will require greater assistance in understanding and adjudicating these new laws. USAID expects to have completed specific tasks in legislative reform, institutional strengthening for court administration/case management, and judicial training by 2007. These tasks comprise an integrated program to implement the GOB's National Judicial Reform Strategy, endorsed by the EU as the roadmap for meeting the judicial reform requirements for EU accession.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Bulgaria

183-0220 Rule of Law	AEEB
Through September 30, 2001	
Obligations	9,201
Expenditures	6,553
Unliquidated	2,648
Fiscal Year 2002	
Obligations	3,806
Expenditures	1,527
Through September 30, 2002	
Obligations	13,007
Expenditures	8,080
Unliquidated	4,927
Prior Year Unobligated Funds	
Obligations	663
Planned Fiscal Year 2003 NOA	
Obligations	3,200
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2003	
Obligations	3,863
Proposed Fiscal Year 2004 NOA	
Obligations	3,500
Future Obligations	0
Est. Total Cost	20,370